

Remarks**I. Status of the Application**

Claims 39-59 are pending in the application.

II. Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103**A. Claims 39-44, 46-53, and 55-59****1. Claim 39**

Claims 39-44, 46-53, and 55-59 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,555,299 ("Maloney") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,617,471 ("Rogers"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 39 requires "receiving, by a directory assistance system, a call from a caller using a communications device, the call including a current request for a suggestion of a third party provider of a product or service desired by the caller, the third party provider being independent of the directory assistance system." Claim 39 also requires "retrieving, from storage, data concerning the manner in which one or more prior requests by the caller to the system were handled" and "utilizing at least the retrieved data concerning the manner in which one or more prior requests were handled to select a third party product or service provider in response to the current request." Claim 39 further requires "searching a database for connection information concerning the selected third party product or service provider," "facilitating a communication between the caller and the selected third party product or service provider based on the connection information," and "storing, in the storage, data concerning the manner in which the current request is handled." Claim 39 additionally requires "after the caller

communicates with the selected third party product or service provider, allowing the caller to return to the directory assistance system without terminating the call, automatically, in response to a predetermined signal received from the caller's communications device."

Maloney discloses a telephone order placement system for transferring calls between a plurality of divisions within a company. (Col. 2, lines 35-38). In the example provided, a caller calls a first division within a company's private network and informs a first operator that he/she wishes to make two purchases - a first purchase from the company's apparel division, and a second purchase from the company's foods division. (Col. 9, lines 1-5). When the call is received at the company's first division, a voice component and a data component are generated and are associated with the call by a unique identifier. (Col. 9, lines 46-54). The first operator assists the caller in making the first purchase. When the caller is transferred to the foods division within the company's network, the voice component and the data component are separately transmitted to a second call center associated with the foods division, and reassembled to enable a second operator to continue the call. (Col. 9, lines 55-67). The second operator reviews the information in the voice and data components, and sees that the caller wishes to make a second purchase from the foods division. (Col. 10, lines 5-7). The operator then assists the caller in completing the second purchase.

The Examiner admits, on page 3 of the Office Action, that Maloney does not teach or suggest a "third party provider of a product or service" and the third party provider "being independent of the directory assistance system, as claimed. Therefore, Maloney does not teach or suggest many of the limitations of claim 1, including (without limitation) "receiving, by a directory assistance system, a call from a caller using a communications device, the call including a current request for a suggestion of a third party provider of a product or service

desired by the caller, the third party provider being independent of the directory assistance system,” and “utilizing at least the retrieved data concerning the manner in which one or more prior requests were handled to select a third party product or service provider in response to the current request.”

Instead, the Office Action alleges that “Rogers teaches specific information on a product (third party provider of a product or service) and the third party provider being independent of the directory assistance system.” (Office Action, page 3). The applicants respectfully disagree.

Rogers discloses a telecommunications system that provides a call transfer function while a user is involved in two independent calls. (Abstract). In an example described at col. 6, line 61 to col. 7, line 6, cited by the Examiner, a customer dials a 1-800 number to place a call to the company ABC located in New York. After reaching the customer service representative in New York, the customer actually wants specific information on a product offered by the company ABC. Instead of the customer service representative making a generic decision on the transfer to a general sales department, a database provides the specific transfer information by looking up a telephone number for a sales representative in Phoenix assigned to the customer. Without any participation by the customer service representative in New York, the call is more efficiently transferred to the sales representative specifically handling the customer’s inquiry.

Rogers does not, as the Office Action alleges, teach or suggest a “third party provider being independent of the directory assistance system,” as required by claim 39. In the disclosed example, the customer calls a 1-800 number to place a call to the ABC Company, and then is transferred by the company’s customer service representative to a “sales representative” in Phoenix. There is no indication that the sales representative does not represent the ABC Company. The sales representative is not, therefore, a third party. Thus, in the cited example,

there is no teaching or suggestion whatsoever of a third party provider who is “independent of the directory assistance system,” as claimed.

Therefore, neither Maloney nor Rogers teaches or suggests “receiving, by a directory assistance system, a call from a caller using a communications device, the call including a current request for a suggestion of a third party provider of a product or service desired by the caller, the third party provider being independent of the directory assistance system,” or “utilizing at least the retrieved data concerning the manner in which one or more prior requests were handled to select a third party product or service provider in response to the current request,” as required by claim 39.

None of the other cited art teaches or suggests the combination of claim 39, either. Claim 46 includes limitations similar to the limitations of claim 39 discussed above. Therefore, claims 39 and 46, and their respective dependent claims, are patentable over the cited art.

2. Claim 59

Independent claim 59 defines a method for use in a directory assistance system. Claim 59 requires “receiving a call from a caller by a directory assistance system, the call including a current request for a suggestion of a third party provider of a product or service desired by the caller, wherein the third party provider is not associated with the directory assistance system.” Claim 59 also requires “retrieving, from storage, data concerning the manner in which one or more prior requests by the caller to the system were handled,” “generating a record comprising the current request and the data concerning prior requests,” and “identifying a geographical region based on the record.” Claim 59 further requires “transferring the record to a call center associated with the geographical region.” “identifying a third party provider of a

product or service that is not associated with the directory assistance system and is located in the geographical region, based at least on the data concerning prior requests contained in the record,” “searching a database for connection information concerning the identified third party product or service provider,” and “facilitating a communication between the caller and the identified third party product or service provider based on the connection information.” Claim 59 additionally requires “storing, in the storage, data concerning the manner in which the current request is handled” and “after the caller communicates with the identified third party product or service provider, allowing the caller to return to the directory assistance system without terminating the call.”

For the reasons set forth above, none of the cited art teaches or suggest receiving a request for a third party provider that is “not associated with the directory assistance system” or identifying a third party provider of a product or service that is “not associated with the directory assistance system,” as claimed.

In addition, neither Maloney nor Rogers teaches or suggests “generating a record comprising the current request and the data concerning prior requests,” “identifying a geographical region based on the record,” and “transferring the record to a call center associated with the geographical region,” as required by claim 59. First, neither Maloney nor Rogers identifies a geographic region based on a “record comprising the current request and the data concerning prior requests,” as claimed. While Rogers discloses identifying a “sales representative in Phoenix assigned to the customer,” there is no teaching or suggestion that Phoenix is identified based on a record comprising “prior requests,” as claimed. Maloney does not identify geographic regions at all. Although Maloney transfers a call from the “apparel division” to the “food products division,” the “food products” division is not a “geographic

region.” There is no disclosure that the “apparel” division” and the “food products division” are located in different locations. In some organizations, a customer service representative handling the “apparel” division” and a customer service representative handling the “food products division” may sit in the same room. Consequently, Maloney and Rogers, individually and collectively, also fail to teach or suggest “transferring the record to a call center associated with the geographical region,” as required by claim 59.

None of the other cited art teaches or suggests the combination of claim 59, either. Therefore, claim 59 is patentable over the cited art.

B. Claims 45 and 54

Claim 45 and 54 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maloney in view of Rogers further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,404,884 (“Marwell”). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 45 depends from claim 39. Claim 54 depends from claim 46. For the reasons set forth above, claims 39 and 46 are patentable over the cited art. Therefore, claims 45 and 54 are also patentable over the cited art.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, each of claims 39-59, as amended, is believed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, consideration or reconsideration of these claims, as appropriate, is requested and allowance of the application is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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